

Proposed Regulations and Interventions for Crisis Schools

October 2005

Proposed Amendments to Regulations

In addition to the current consequences that apply for schools in CATS or NCLB status, the Kentucky Department of Education proposes to intervene in a more intensive and focused way in those schools that have shown the least progress in raising performance and closing achievement gaps. These schools are in *crisis* and KDE will need to amend regulations to provide them more intensive assistance. The amendments would become effective in 2006.

The proposed amendments would be *required* for schools in CATS level three for two out of three biennia and NCLB tier 5 schools, and *recommended* for level 3, one biennia and NCLB tiers 3 and 4 schools. We propose:

1. Current regulations allow for certain additional interventions to be applied to level 3 schools that remain in that status for two (2) consecutive biennia. There have been a certain number of schools that have moved in, out, and back into level 3 status from one biennia to another. In order to provide more sustained intervention to these schools, it is proposed that 703 KAR 5:120, section 5 be amended to state that a school that falls into level 3 status for 2 out of 3 biennia rather than just 2 consecutive biennia will receive additional interventions as explained below.
2. Currently, there are five (5) tiers under NCLB into which schools fall if they do not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for a certain number of years ranging from 2 to 6. Additionally, schools that perform below a certain score on CATS are identified as level 1, level 2, or level 3. It is recommended that administrative regulations be amended to allow for schools in level 3 for two out of three biennia and tier 5 schools to receive the same consequences and interventions. With this change, governance of tier 5 schools will be determined by scholastic audit teams the same as two biennia level 3 schools.

Proposed New Interventions for Crisis Schools

For many months, KDE staff has been analyzing research, conducting field staff surveys, observing successful schools, interviewing school staff, and meeting to discuss and compile all relevant information in order to come up with the most effective strategies to assist low performing schools and schools that have significant achievement gaps. Many individuals and groups have been consulted in this effort including the following: Highly Skilled Educators, local school district staff, Achievement Gap Coordinators, District Support Facilitators, Targeted Assistance Coaches, KDE Office of Leadership and School Improvement staff, KDE Office of Special Instructional Services staff, KDE Office of Teaching and Learning staff, KDE Office of Assessment and Accountability staff, Partnership for Kentucky Schools, educational consultants from the University of Kentucky, and current and former educators.

The following recommendations were prioritized as those having the greatest impact on student improvement and are arranged around these major topics: 1) school culture, 2) leadership,

3) articulated curriculum, 4) effective instruction and 5) data-driven decisions and progress monitoring. Substantial and sustained gains in student achievement will result if schools and districts address and improve these five areas. Heightened focus and a commitment of resources to these needs are necessary to move low-performing schools and those with significant achievement gaps from their current status to higher levels in order to improve achievement of all students. The following interventions will be required and or recommended in schools as stated above:

1. School Culture

- Require culture/climate assessments as part of the audit process in these schools and their districts with a follow-up plan of action for implementation and evaluation of impact on student learning. Each school is to form a team to receive on-going and intensive professional development on the concepts of instructional discipline, school organizational culture/climate and strategies that promote and sustain healthy culture/climate. This training will be a process rather than a single event and the team will be responsible for training other school staff.
- Amend regulations to require these schools to develop teacher assistance teams (TAT) to assist students who are struggling academically, socially and/or emotionally. The teams will receive professional development to ensure internalization of a process that is positive, proactive and designed to meet the needs of all students.
- Recommend that at these schools every student should be assigned an adult mentor.
- Amend regulations to require the “School Report Card” for all schools to be revised to bring more prominence to the scores of subpopulations of students. This will increase communication to parents/families regarding the performance of their children.

2. Leadership

- Require superintendents and principals of these schools to join leadership teams to receive targeted, research-based leadership training. KDE will work with educational cooperatives, universities and other partners such as the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) and the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) to provide guidance and training of these administrators, while KDE will conduct monitoring and implementation support. The training will focus on school culture, balanced leadership, articulated curriculum, effective instruction, data-driven decisions, measuring progress, and engaging the community.
- Require superintendents and principals of these schools to work with assigned mentors.
- Identify teacher leaders at these schools to form instructional leadership teams that will assist in improving instruction, facilitating embedded professional development, and advancing the knowledge and skills of the staffs. Instructional leadership teams will be formed following audit team recommendations.
- Report to the Education Professional Standards Board any principal who has been at a school for four years and that school has become classified as in "crisis".
- Amend regulations to require that a district desiring to reconfigure a crisis school must apply for and receive permission from KDE.

3. Articulated Curriculum

- Require staff in these schools to participate in KDE-sponsored professional development that focuses on the revised core content.
- Require these schools to identify and communicate how and when the content considered essential for all students will be taught.
- Require the schools to create a plan to ensure teachers teach the essential content (as opposed to the textbook) and incorporate such into the school improvement plan.
- Require these schools to have a research-based, prescriptive curriculum design using their Commonwealth School Improvement Funds and Title I school improvement funds.

4. Effective Instruction

- Require instructional leadership teams in these schools to be trained by a support network of specialists with expertise in meeting the needs of all students who will help with the implementation of strategies designed to bring all students to the level of proficiency. District personnel may also be included in this training.
- Amend regulations to revise the current evaluation tool used for evaluation of teachers and administrators in the school to include standards and indicators that will lead to improved student achievement. The newly revised evaluation tool will be used to monitor the provision of effective instruction in the classroom and the extent to which all children were taught a rigorous curriculum. Standards pertaining to a healthy classroom and school environment where students' needs are identified and met will be incorporated in the evaluation process for teachers, classified staff and administrators in these schools.
- Require and provide professional development for teachers and paraeducators in these schools on effective instructional practices for ensuring the appropriate inclusion of all children in instruction.
- Provide math and literacy coaches in all crisis schools for the biennia (KDE).

5. Data-driven decision making and measuring progress

- Require staff in these schools to receive professional development in measuring progress that would include on-going and diagnostic assessments to inform instruction.
- Require staff in these schools to receive professional development in analyzing the Kentucky Performance Report and NCLB report to ensure meaningful feedback on student learning for instructional purposes. The professional development will provide explanations of academic trend data, content results and national norm-reference test results and enable staff to make decisions about student achievement, curricular and instructional strategies, as well as plan for continuous improvement that is guided by effective analysis of results.
- Require staff in these schools to implement a well-defined, transparent, continuous formative assessment process to evaluate and analyze student performance so that teachers will know where the student is performing at the beginning of each year and can track the student and teacher progress throughout the school year. This type of information will be collected over time to monitor student progress and will be used to develop Individual Graduation Plans for students.

Attached for your information and discussion at the October meeting are charts showing the gains and gaps of various subpopulations.

Attachments

JG:dp